

ARTICLE 17

AWARDS PROGRAM

1. The Parties agree that the employee suggestion, incentive, and performance award programs are beneficial to both Management and the employee. The awards program will be administered in accordance with Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 451, 430, and 531 (5 CFR Parts 451, 430, and 531,) Forest Service Handbook (FSH 6109.13 – Performance, Training, And Awards Handbook, Chapter 10), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Guide for Employee Recognition. The Parties mutually agree that safety, civil rights, productivity, efficiency, and public service will receive emphasis in the awards program.

Labor Management Relations Committees and/or Partnership Councils may periodically evaluate and review the unit's awards program to ensure the administration is fair, equitable, effective, and understandable.

2. **Employee Recognition:** An award is something bestowed or an action taken to recognize and reward individual or team achievement that contributed to meeting organizational goals or improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the Forest Service operations or is in the public interest. Group awards should be given based on the employee's contribution or participatory value rather than solely on the employee's grade. Awards may have the effect of motivating employees to increase their productivity and creativity for the benefit of the agency and its customers. To meet this goal, awards should be given as soon as possible after the achievement. Awards programs will be equitable in opportunity and there must be fairness and equity in the distribution of awards. All employees will be given an equal opportunity to work at a level sufficient for award eligibility. Except for Quality-Step Increases, all awards are available to temporary employees. However, ~~only~~ term employees are eligible for Quality-Step Increases.

3. Effective awards programs include performance bonus awards, monetary awards, nonmonetary awards, and time-off awards. Also included are peer programs and the Length of Service recognition.
- a. **Performance Bonuses:** Recognition given for performance rated above fully successful. The two types of awards are the lump-sum performance bonus and Quality-Step Increase. See FSH 6109.13 – Performance, Training, And Awards Handbook, Chapter 10 – Performance Management Program for further information on performance bonus awards.
 - b. **Monetary Awards:** Recognition given for a particular accomplishment, such as superior contribution on a short-term assignment or project, an act of heroism, scientific achievement, major discovery, or significant cost savings. Dollar amounts are determined by the value of benefit and application of the contribution to the Forest Service mission or goals. Nonmonetary awards can be given in conjunction with monetary recognition. Types of monetary awards include extra effort, spot, gain sharing, and suggestions.
 - c. **Nonmonetary Awards:** Recognition given for a specific outstanding accomplishment, such as those defined in Section 3.b. Types of these awards include time-off awards, keepsakes, letters of appreciation, and honorary awards.
 - d. **Peer Awards:** Parties encourage the use of a peer award program, wherein employees are authorized to recognize coworkers, either monetarily or nonmonetarily, which may be established at the appropriate level.
 - e. **Length of Government Service Recognition:** Employees will be recognized in 5-year increments for their length of government service. A length of service award will include a pin, certificate, and a nonmonetary keepsake.

4. The Parties agree that an Outstanding rating in an employee's performance summary rating will generally receive a performance bonus.
5. Employees receiving Superior ratings are eligible for performance bonuses. Performance bonuses will be at Management's discretion.
6. Management will schedule an appropriate award presentation for an employee taking into account the employee's preferences. When possible, the supervisor will inform the employee of a monetary award before the employee receives the money.
7. Recipients will be given a choice in the type of recognition they receive whenever possible. For example, an employee may select a time-off award in lieu of a monetary award. Once granted, time-off awards cannot be converted to a cash payment (5 CFR 451.104(f)). Also, an employee may be offered the opportunity to select from among several kinds of nonmonetary keepsakes for length-of-service recognition.
8. A Union official at the appropriate level may request a list of awards given to all bargaining unit and non-bargaining unit employees of an organizational unit(s) (for example, district, forest, station, or region). Management will provide the list for the last 3 years. The standard report will include: type of award, amount, date of award, pay plan, grade, series, title, bargaining unit status code, and organizational codes to Level 5.

Note: This standard report does not include employee names. Locals that need employee names or other information than that which is in the standard report above will need to file an information request and provide a particularized need.

9. The Parties recognize that awards to Union officials for performing representational duties are not appropriate. This does not preclude an employee who is from a bargaining unit or Union official from receiving recognition, including cash awards, for special acts or for team involvement in partnership efforts or otherwise contributing to successful collaborative Labor-

Management relations, as long as the work being rewarded is nonrepresentational.

This section recognizes that a Union official who serves on agency or project task forces as a representative of a partnership council or as a designee of Management, and not as a representative of the Union, is eligible to receive incentive awards consistent with Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) guidance (Office of General Counsel Memorandum dated August 8, 1995, Subject: Duty to Bargain Over Programs Establishing Employee Involvement and Statutory Obligations When Selecting Employees for Work Groups, pp. 6-8).

- 10.** Certain aspects of award programs may be negotiated at the Local or Intermediate level; however, the scope of negotiability is limited by law and the parties are encouraged to seek advice from the National Parties.